

The following is a “State of the City” report that presents the initial findings of the City of Gary Comprehensive Plan process.

Plan Purpose

The City of Gary Comprehensive Plan will be a long-term document that will be used by elected and appointed officials, residents, community leaders, property and business owners, and developers as a guide for planning and development decisions over the next 10 to 20 years. The Plan should be revisited and updated every five years to ensure that goals are being met and objectives and strategies continue to be realistic.

The Plan serves several purposes depending on the needs of the user:

- **Existing Conditions:** City officials and community members can use the document to review where Gary is today in terms of existing population, land use, transportation, and physical conditions.
- **Development Framework:** The Plan provides a foundation for development and redevelopment activities within the City. It sets forth broad development parameters that can be used to review and adjust community improvement and development projects. City staff and Plan commissioners will review development projects for conformance with the appropriate goals, objectives, and policies set forth by the Plan.
- **Public Investment Guide:** The City Council will use the Plan in its decision-making process regarding community development initiatives. The City will also use the Plan for programming capital improvement projects. The community-wide information on existing conditions and future land-use and transportation needs will also be used to seek grants at the regional, state, and federal levels.
- **Private Investment Guide:** People interested in investing and developing in Gary can use the Plan to gain insight into the City’s development context and direction. The sections regarding future land-use and goals, objectives, and strategies will be beneficial for making private development decisions.
- **Future Vision:** The Plan will act as a tool to inform current and future residents about the City’s vision over the next 20 years.
- **Public Participation Tool:** The Plan provides an opportunity for community leaders and residents to evaluate community strengths and weaknesses and craft a new development direction. Through future improvement and development projects, more detailed planning, and five-year updates, the community can continue to guide and shape its future in an efficient and coordinated manner.

Planning Mission

To facilitate the planning process and assist in crafting citywide improvement and development strategies, the City engaged a multi-disciplinary professional team that included the following firms:

- **BauerLatoza Studio** (Architects, Landscape Architects, and Urban Designers; Team Leader)
- **The Lakota Group** (Planners and Urban Designers)
- **S.B. Friedman & Company** (Market Analysts)
- **RQAW** (Transportation Planners and Engineers)
- **Huff & Huff** (Environmental Planners and Engineers)
- **Blalock & Brown** (Public Relations Specialists)

The Gary comprehensive planning process represents an important opportunity for the City to:

- Establish short- and long-range development frameworks;
- Create development concepts for key sub-areas;
- Attract land-uses and development more compatible with community goals and needs, infrastructure, environmental conditions, and character;
- Improve the City's land-use, physical conditions, and quality of life;
- Integrate neighborhood plans into a larger community-wide vision;
- Preserve and enhance the community's historic character and structures;
- Maintain an efficient transportation system.

Plan Organization

A comprehensive land-use plan must reflect the local conditions, concerns, and goals of a community. Elements that need to be addressed include:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Planning Issues

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- Development Opportunities
- Public Participation

These elements are addressed and incorporated where appropriate within this Comprehensive Plan.

Sections 1 through 11 describe “**The State of the City**” via an analysis of the current land use, transportation, environmental, and real estate market setting. An overall, projected vision for the City, along with recommended **future land use** changes and development framework, are set forth in **Section 12, “Gary in the 21st Century.”** This vision describes the end state the community intends to achieve within the next 10 to 20 years. **Section 13** outlines **11 key sub-areas** and each footprint’s associated **development concepts** and **strategies**. Lastly, in **Section 14, next steps** in the planning process are outlined on how to implement and realize the Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Process

The Gary planning process began in April 2007 and included the following plan mileposts:

Phase 1

Project Start Meeting & Community Tour (April 17, 2007)

A meeting with City Staff was held to initiate the process, define constraints and opportunities, discuss initial planning goals, and tour the community.

Team Fieldwork

The consultant team conducted numerous tours of the City during Phase 1 to review and assess community land use, transportation, environmental and physical conditions, character, and development or redevelopment opportunities.

Interviews (June/July/August 2007)

The team conducted interviews with the members of the City Council, Plan Commission, Parks Department, and Planning Department.

Focus Group (August 2, 2007)

A focus group meeting was held with community residents, leaders, and business owners to discuss City issues, opportunities, and ideas.

Existing Plans/Studies

Phase 1 also involved a review of existing plans and studies that address planning and development in the City. These are summarized in the Appendix.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

“The State of the City” Analysis

The first phase of the process concluded with the assessment of the community’s transportation system, natural resources, land-use and physical setting, and real estate market, which is summarized in the report.

Phase 2

Land-Use Strategies & Development Concepts (August - February 2008)

These scenarios were developed through a series of in-house meetings lead by Planning Director Christopher Meyers with City Staff and the Comp Plan Team. Developed ideas were then presented to the public in Five Community Vision Workshops and refined to include citizen’s ideas and comments on how to further develop their neighborhoods and improve quality of life.

Community Vision Workshops (October - December 2007)

A workshop was conducted in each Council district to brief community members on the planning process and to gather input on community needs and opportunities.

Phase 3

City Wide Workshop (March 2008)

The preliminary plan including market study data, “The State of the City” Analysis, development concepts and strategies, and other findings were presented to elected officials, citizens, and businesses.

Plan Commission Presentation (September - October 2008)

The completed plan was presented to the Plan Commission for acceptance. Plan Commission accepted the plan and recommended that it be moved to the Common Council for consideration and acceptance as the City’s official Comprehensive Plan for 2008 - 2028.